

disorders relating to digestive processes, inflammatory intestinal diseases, polyposis, hypercholesterolaemia, infections with *Helicobacter pylori*, disorders of neonatal growth, disorders connected with intestinal homeostasis and diseases of the central and peripheral nervous systems comprising administering to a subject in need of same a composition comprising a prophylactic or therapeutically effective amount of alkaline sphingomyelinase.

26. (new) The method according to Claim 25 wherein the composition is administered as a pediatric dietary supplement.

27. (new) The method according to Claim 25, wherein the composition is administered orally or parenterally.

B1 28. (new) The method according to Claim 26, wherein the composition is administered, in combination with artificial milk, condensed milk, soybean milk, powdered milk, partially umanized milk or a baby food.

29. (new) The method according to Claim 25, wherein the alkaline sphingomyelinase is of bacterial origin, and the bacteria containing it are selected from the group consisting of Gram-positive bacteria, Gram-negative bacteria, lactic acid bacteria, and mixtures thereof.

30. (new) The method according to Claim 29, wherein the lactic acid bacteria are selected from the group consisting of *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, *Lactobacillus brevis*, *Lactobacillus buchneri*, *Lactobacillus casei*, *Lactobacillus cateniforme*, *Lactobacillus cellobiosus*, *Lactobacillus crispatus*, *Lactobacillus curvatus*, *Lactobacillus delbrueckii*, *Lactobacillus fermentum*, *Lactobacillus jensenii*, *Lactobacillus leichmannii*,

*Lactobacillus minutus*, *Lactobacillus plantarum*, *Lactobacillus rogosae*, *Lactobacillus salivarius*, *Bifidobacterium adolescentis*, *Bifidobacterium angulatum*, *Bifidobacterium bifidum*, *Bifidobacterium breve*, *Bifidobacterium catenulatum*, *Bifidobacterium dentium*, *Bifidobacterium eriksonii*, *Bifidobacterium infantis*, *Bifidobacterium longum*, *Bifidobacterium plantarum*, *Bifidobacterium pseudocatenulatum*, *Bifidobacterium pseudolongum*, *Streptococcus lactis*, *Streptococcus raffinolactis* and *Streptococcus thermophilus*.

31. (new) The method according to Claim 30, wherein a *Lactobacillus brevis* CD2 strain Accession No. DSM 11,988 is used.

B1 32. (new) The method according to Claim 29, wherein lactic acid bacteria are used in the composition as live, lyophilized or sonicated bacteria.

33. (new) The method according to Claim 32, wherein from  $1 \times 10^2$  to  $1 \times 10^{13}$  CFUs of lactic acid bacteria are used per gram of composition.

34. (new) The method according to Claim 29, wherein  $200 \times 10^9$  *Streptococcus thermophilus*,  $150 \times 10^9$  Bifidobacteria and  $4 \times 10^9$  *Lactobacillus acidophilus* are used per gram of composition.--

add c4